NEEDHAM'S FAILURE

By JOSEPH HATTON.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

"No, sir, not very late," said the night porter at the Old Hummuns hotel, as John Needham, having rung the door-bell, entered the hall.

"The trains alter their times on Sunday," said Needham, "and I had to walk several miles before I could get a cab."

"Yes, sir, that's the worst of Sunday traveling."

"Bar closed?" asked Needham, sitting in the porter's chair.

"Yes, sir; but they leaves me out some whisky and brandy and soda; which will you take, sir?"

"Soda and brandy."

"Yes, sir."

The porter foraged about in a mysterious corner and produced the liquor. Needham drank it off at a draught.

"I was very thirsty," he said; "can you give me another?"

"Yes, sir."

"And a pair of slippers?"

"There they are, sir," said the porter, placing a bootjack and a pair of slippers at the guest's feet, and then proceeding to open another bottle of soda.

Needham dragged off his boot with some difficulty, and the porter assisted him to put on the slippers.

"Any cigars?"

"Yes, sir."

"Never mind; I think I have one."

He pulled out Joseph Norbury's cigar-case, took out a cigar and laid the case on the shelf of the bar window. It was a rather showily embroidered case—a present from his sister. He hoped the porter would recognize it.

The porter gave him a light and then handed him the case.

"A pretty thing, is it not?" said Needham.

"That's just what I was a-thinking, sir."

"A present from my sister."

"Yes, sir, and it's very becoming, showy, but not gaudy, as they says."

Needham drank his second brandy with only a very small quantity of soda, and then asked for a candle.

Taking it from the porter he hesitated, and then said: "I always forget my number; will you not show me the way?"

"Oh yes, sir, with pleasure; let me see now, what *is* the number; sitting and bedroom, ain't it?"

Needham did not answer; he was busy relighting his cigar.

"You come in Thursday night's Midland, of course; I remember the overcoat, of course, Mr. Norbury, No. 13, seeing you in evening dress didn't strike me, and you speaks a little different; got cold, that's what you've got, sir; a walkin' in the wet, stupid of me to forget, and I prides myself in my memory for customers, you goes to Liverpool to-morrow morning, of course, henroot for America, beg your pardon, sir, I'm sure."

"Don't mention it," said Needham, following the porter, who led the way up two flights of stairs and along a winding passage, to what seemed to be the back part of the house.

Then pausing, the porter turned the handle of the door.

"Locked, sir."

"There's the key," said Needham; "is it unusual to lock one's door?"

"Yes, sir; if gentlemen have any valuables they generally leaves 'em at the bar."

The porter unlocked the door; Needham followed him into the room.

"Have you no more candles?"

"Oh yes, sir; there's two on the dressing-table."

"Light them."

"Yes, sir."

"Any more?"

"Candles, sir?"

"Yes."

"There's two on the sitting room mantel."

He opened another door, and went into the sitting room.

"Light them."

"Yes, sir."

"I have some writing to do before going to bed."

"Yes, sir, what time will you be called, sir?"

"My train goes at ten, I think?"

"Euston for Liverpool? Yes, sir."

"Call me at seven."

"Yes, sir."

"Do you get The Observer here?"

"The what, sir?"

"The Observer newspaper."

"The Sunday paper? Yes, sir."

"I shall want something to read in the train. There's five shillings; get me all the different papers you can that come out on Sundays. Let me have them when I am called. Shall you call me?"

"Yes, sir. I goes off at eight."

"That's all right."

"Thankee, sir. Good night, sir."

"At last!" Needham exclaimed, flinging himself upon a couch, "at last!"

He spoke no more, nor spoke for a long time, but fell into a profound sleep—slept as quietly as an innocent, good man is supposed to sleep. He was physically fagged and worn out, and nature would no longer be denied.

The candles were nearly burned out when he awoke. He rubbed his eyes and looked around him. Then he got up and shivered. The sunlight was struggling through the whity brown blinds. He walked across the room, drew the blind aside, and peered out.

"Yes, I have been to sleep," he said; "it is no dream, I have done it all—all! What energy! And I thought I could only lie down and die. What crime! I thought I had waded in it already to my very lips!"

He looked at his watch.

"Four o'clock—morning. They used to talk of Covent Garden as a sight to see at four o'clock, the country folk—Covent Garden and Billingsgate!"

He drew up the blind, and, standing back from the window, contemplated the scene. "But it is Sunday," he said, "and all is quiet—awfully quiet, as if everybody had gone to Hampstead Heath to see the work of Cain!"

Then, turning his back upon the window, he said: "I must go to work; first reconnoiter, then action."

He put out the candles and made a careful survey of the two rooms and the luggage.

"Have I any trunks that are not here, I wonder—one perhaps too large to drag upstairs? Have I placed any valuables in the bar safe? If I have, why did I lock the door and put the key in my pocket?"

He opened a large leather portmanteau; the key was in the lock.

"Ready packed—need not disturb that."

"A dispatch box," he remarked, turning to a traveling case upon a chest of drawers; "very like my own, and with my initials on the lid! Strange! Have I really some work to do in the world yet that the other couldn't do? Or is this only smoothing my way to perdition? But a truce to philosophizing! No more theorizing, John—I mean Joseph—we must be practical now—and cunning, devilish cunning."

He turned over the papers.

"Ah! Mr. John Needham's letters of introduction! Wonder if I should keep them? Yes. He may have shown them to his solicitor, the family lawyer who arrived so opportunely on Saturday. Saturday! Last night? Why, it seems an age! Ah! letters of credit, £3,000—good! Portraits! My wife? Yes, no doubt. My sister? Of course. And her lover? Certainly. A check book! What's this—a memorandum on the cover. '£300 banknotes, in charge of landlord,' and the date—yesterday! Good. Shall I have to sign my name? Let me see."

He took up the letters of credit, went to a writing table, upon which there were pens, ink and paper, and an ornamental pad with J. N. worked upon the corner.

"An easy signature," he said, sitting down. "I have found much more difficult ones easy before now—J-o-s-e-p-h N-o-r-b-u-r-y."

He wrote each letter carefully and slowly.

"My hand trembles, eh? No—it is the position of the elbow."

Then he rested the whole of his arm upon the table and began afresh.

"Yes, that is better."

He tried again and again, writing the name more quickly each time, and at last dashing it off easily.

"That will do."

Then he tore up his failures, and leaving his last effort upon the table, went to the fireplace, removed the paper ornament, tried the damper to see if it was down, found it up, and lighting the bits of paper watched them blaze. Next he took off his coat and washed and shaved himself.

"My traveling clothes are laid out ready." Then he repeated "laid out," and paused to say "a grim phrase."

He changed his dress clothes, packed them away, examined the dispatch box thoroughly, investigated the dressing case, which contained several rings, a few sovereigns, some silver, and a miniature portrait of a lady in a locket, and a letter bearing yesterday's London postmark.

"Who is this from? My sister? Yes—Kate Norbury." He read as follows:

"MY DEAR JOE: Good-by again, my dear. It is already very, very lonely without you, but I can bear it for your sake, and as the days go on there will be the looking forward to your coming back, and that will make the time fly. And you will take great care of yourself, won't you? If ever you are tempted to run any risks, think of me, and Aunt Dorothy, and Dick, and always remember that we are thinking of you. Aunt Dorothy arrived two hours ago, and is full of good spirits, and she insists that Dick is to come and spend Saturday and Sunday as usual, whereby I am writing to him now to say that Aunt Dorothy insists, and that he can come if he likes. Do you know, Joe, my dear, I think Dick is as fond of you as he is of me, only that I am a woman you know and you are not, and if you were I should be jealous of you, for, if I don't tell Dick that I love him very much there is no harm in my telling you, is there? Because you know what love is, and you know how much I love you; so much, that I will never marry Dick without your consent, though Aunt Dorothy says that is nonsense, but she is very much prejudiced in my favor. The greyhounds missed you yesterday, and the old cob seemed to ask for you when I gave him some oats, and in the village they are all talking of you and wishing you a good voyage and a safe return. I shall expect to hear from you in the morning, and you will send me a telegraphic message from Liverpool, won't you? Take care of yourself, and write to me the moment you arrive, and always feel that you are in all our thoughts, and especially in mine. Your most loving and affectionate sister,

KATE."

"Ah," he said, pondering the character of the writing, "she is a woman of more determination than her brother; she writes a firmer hand, makes no flourishes; it is a pretty style, too, jaunty; wonder what he said in reply? Wonder what he wrote in the letter that probably crossed this? Did he mention me? And if so, how? Did he say I was like him in appearance or he like me?"

He waited to be called, pretended he was in bed when the porter knocked, told him to leave the hot water and his boots at the door.

"And the noosepapers," said the porter, "two, sir."

"All right," said Needham; and as he quietly unlocked the door when the porter had gone away, he said to himself, "Noosepapers, indeed! Not if I know it. If discovery is possible they will never get *my* head into a noose!"

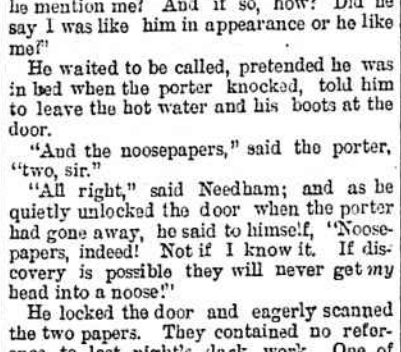
He locked the door and eagerly scanned the two papers. They contained no reference to last night's dark work. One of them had an on dit respecting his coming financial fall; but that did not disturb him.

By half-past nine o'clock he had breakfasted, paid his bill, received the parcel of money that had been deposited at the bar, and was being driven to Euston, the sun shining on him as freely as if he were not the least saint-like of the thousands of worshippers for whose behoof many church-bells were already beginning to chime for Sabbath rites and sermons.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

On Sunday morning a bird catcher on the hunt for "feather-headed" warblers who could detect no difference in the song of the decoy from the fresh wild notes of liberty, came upon the dead body of a gentleman not far from the well-known hostelry called Jack Straw's Castle. First he saw a horse browsing in one of the little adjoining valleys. Half a mile farther on he saw a brougham partly on the bridle path at the back of the tavern, and partly in a furze bush; and close by lay the dead body of a gentleman, cold and stiff. It was in evening dress. The clothes were wet. A crushed hat and a bottle labeled "essential oil of almonds" was lying by its side, and on the bottle was written, "John Needham, Esq., M. P., Portland place." Near the brougham was a silver spirit flask with "John Needham" engraved upon it, together with a crest. It contained essential oil of almonds, and there was still left in the other bottle a considerable quantity of the deadly drug. The bird catcher, relinquishing business for the day, went to the inn and roused the landlord. It was a glorious summer morning. The thunder-



DISCOVERY OF THE BODY.

storm of the preceding night had freshened the earth and cleared the atmosphere. Hampstead heath was a picture of beauty, the air full of sweet perfumes, and the sun was flooding the landscape with a soft and tender light.

Assistance being procured, and the police duly introduced into the affair, the body was removed to Hampstead workhouse, where it awaited the coroner's inquest. It lay there in the deadhouse while the murderer was traveling comfortably enough to Liverpool. The train stopped too frequently, however, for his perfect satisfaction. It made him feel lonely and strange to see people greeting each other, coming and going, exchanging Sunday visits. He was almost the only first-class passenger. He had brought the dispatch box into his carriage, and for the first two hours of his journey he read many of the papers and letters and memoranda which it contained. Then he turned to the newspapers again and read over the on dit relating to himself, and for the publication of which he was glad, seeing that it would help to prepare the public for the discovery on Hampstead heath. Had it been discovered? he asked himself, and answering it at the same time. Of course it had. How? By whom? What had they done with it? Taken it to Portland place? Would the affair be in to-morrow's papers? When would he see to-morrow's papers? Had he left any detail of the business unconsidered? Did any body know that Norbury had called on him? Had any body noticed the likeness between them. Had Norbury told his lawyer that he was to call on Mr. Needham? What would it matter if he had? Supposing they made inquiries about Norbury? They would only learn that he came in late, had been in the country, and had gone to Liverpool. Was there anything odd in Norbury's conduct? No. He paid his bill, gave a receipt for the money they had taken care of for him; did not forget his unpacked trunk in the hall. But they might want him as a witness; they might send to Liverpool after him. Could they do it in time to stop his sailing? Yes, that troubled him; and as he alighted from the train towards evenin he received a rude shock.

"How do you do, Needham?" said a gentleman on the platform. "I thought I was the only man who felt obliged to travel on Sundays."

"I beg your pardon," said Needham, with a real stammer, an exaggeration of his customary slight hesitation of manner, "you have the advantage of me."

"Mr. Needham, is it not?" said the other. "Mr. John Needham, surely I cannot be mistaken."

"You are, sir; my name is Norbury."

"I beg your pardon," said the other; "my name is Green—Wilfred Green. I am the member for Harwood, and I could have sworn you were a colleague of mine."

"You honor me," said Needham; "I have never aspired to a seat in parliament."

"I beg your pardon," said the stranger again.

Needham smiled, took off his hat and moved away.

"Curse him!" he muttered between his teeth; "I always hated him—the jabbering idiot. What will he say when he reads the papers to-morrow?"

What did he say? When he read of the discovery of the body he rubbed his hands with pleasure. Not that he disliked Needham, but because he was a spiritualist, an active, talking, and writing spiritualist; and he believed he had seen Needham's materialized spirit on its travels. He suddenly remembered that he and Needham had not many weeks previously had a long conversation of a psychological and Biblical character, in which Needham had expressed his entire belief in the Biblical visions and in ghosts, and had confessed that he saw no reason why the Nineteenth century should be deprived of spiritual intercourse with those who had gone before them to the spirit land. Mr. Wilfred Green, M. P., wrote a letter to The Times stating that it might be more than a coincidence, the appearance unto him at Liverpool, on Sunday, of John Needham; and he suggested several curious psychological explanations of the same. It might have been an optical effort of the mind or a communication from the spirit world; John Needham's personality might for the moment have been unconsciously assumed by another, for spirit purposes; but he left the facts to the learned and scientific, contenting himself with setting them forth. And for several days the learned and scientific "gave him fits," to quote a popular, if vulgar phrase, while one very imaginative and sensational journalist hinted that if Green had seen anybody it was really John Needham, and that the body upon which the inquest had sat was a "spurious corpse."

These and other strange circumstances set up in the sensitive mind of Kate Norbury a great and dreadful fear.

CHAPTER X.

DESCRIBES THE CORONER'S INQUEST, THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE AND THE RESULT.

The inquest was opened on Tuesday morning. The body had been identified by the deceased's brother Henry and by the butler. Several personal friends were present, including two members of parliament. There had not been the smallest doubt, of course, as to the suicide, and the evidence of the servants showed how completely Needham had laid his plans. Some of the jury, while chatting among themselves, had expressed surprise that the deceased should have taken so much trouble about it, and that he should do such an odd thing as to drive up to Hampstead. In answer to this it was suggested that he might have done these curious things for the purpose of leading up to a verdict of insanity.

This was the nature of the conversation that took place while the jury was going to view the body and returning to Jack Straw's Castle, where the inquest was held.

James Rogers was the first witness called. He deposed that he was butler of the deceased, and resided at his master's house, Portland place. He had seen and identified the body as that of Mr. John Needham, whom he had last seen alive at about six o'clock on Saturday evening, at which time he waited upon him at dinner. Mr. Needham had sent the footman and the coachman to Leighton Buzzard an hour or so before. His master took a very light dinner, and afterwards he (Rogers) went with the other servants to the opera. The witness then related the circumstances under which he and the rest had gone to the opera, and afterwards to supper. They did not return home until two in the morning. Found the house very much as it was when he left. In the library there were the remains of some coffee, and the spirit bottles and other things were on the table. Mr. Needham had, he should say, had his cup of coffee and cigar as usual. The cup had since been washed, and so also had the coffee pot. Of course if he had known of the sad business he would have had the things remain as they were. Nobody had been to the house during the day except Mr. Nolan, the solicitor. He came to breakfast, and the master drove him home in the afternoon. The carriage used was the pair horse brougham, and the coachman and footman were on the box. Had not observed anything peculiar in his master's manner during the last few months. Thought it curious at the time his treating everybody to the opera and being so particularly affable, but put it down to a sudden act of generosity and being his birthday, though he must say it astonished him very much. The parlor maid, however, had said she thought the master was mad; but it was a way she had."

"A way she had?" the coroner asked.

"Yes, sir. Any one a-doing anything she don't quite see, she'd say, 'Oh, he's mad—mad as a hatter.'" (Laughter.)

"And she did not quite 'see' the master's invitation to the opera, eh?"

"That was it, sir; and so she bounces, as I understands, into the kitchen and says the master's mad."

"Yes, that will do; we don't want to hear what you understand, but what you know of your own knowledge."

"Yes, sir; that's what I was a-sayin——"

"That will do; the next witness."

Thomas Bobbins was then called. He said he was a bird catcher—"dealt in 'em"—and lived at Tickheel court, Hampstead. Came across the body at eight o'clock Sunday morning. Saw the horse first; then the body; then the brougham; called to a chap as he see near the castle to come afore he touched it; and then the police, some time afterward. All the clothes was on the body, and the deceased had laid his overcoat down first to lie upon, that was evident; and close by was the opera hat, and the bottle and flask now produced. The clothes were wet, as it had rained heavy the first part of the night. The bottle had "Essential Oil of Almonds" on it, and "Poison" in big letters, and the druggist's name.

Here the coroner explained that he had preferred to let this witness give his evidence exactly in his own words before asking him any special questions, but from this point he asked him a great many, further eliciting that there was no evidence of a struggle and no particular footmarks, seeing that the spot where the body was lying was "furzy," and not calculated to show much in the way of footmarks. But there were plenty of footmarks there now, for the spot had been crowded with people ever since, and a lot of the gorse had been torn away.

The coroner expressed his regret that the footprints had been obliterated; he thought the police should have kept the place clear, and he thought it a matter for serious reprobation the morbid curiosity of the public as exemplified by the removal of gorse as mementos. (Applause.)

Police Constable Jones (221S) gave evidence as to the removal of the body. There were no signs of a struggle. In the deceased's pockets were a razor, six pounds and ten shillings in gold and silver, a case with visiting cards of the deceased in it. The bottle of poison was lying near his right hand as if it had dropped out of it. The deceased's clothes were wet, but otherwise undisturbed.

Mr. Jabez Northwick, surgeon, practicing at Hampstead, said he saw the body at nine o'clock on Sunday morning in the dead house. It was cold, the limbs rigid, the eyes glistening, life-like; the face calm and placid, and there was a powerful odor of the essential oil of bitter almonds perceptible at the mouth. There was no froth or anything to show that the unfortunate gentleman had died of poison except the smell of it. He had made a post mortem examination of the body, and it had undergone little or no change. There were no marks of external violence, some post mortem congestion of the lungs, no valvular disease of

DR. NORTHWICK TESTIFIES.

the heart; a thickening was perceptible in the left ventricle; the right auricle of the heart was distended with blood, the left auricle empty; no odor of essential oil of almonds all over the body. The stomach contained undigested food, and imbedded in it numerous black particles perceptible to the naked eye. On examination they proved to be powdered opium, and they were stuck all over the mucous membrane, and so numerous as not to be counted. The liver was healthy, the pupils of the eyes dilated, the brain and membrane congested, but otherwise healthy and without any signs of inflammation. It was quite possible the deceased had taken a strong narcotic as well as the essential oil of almonds, but the latter was the cause of death.

At this point the butler was recalled and related what the reader already knows in regard to the bottle delivered at the house by the druggist's assistant; and the next witness was Mr. Drewer, the druggist himself, who related the incident of Mr. Needham's call and purchase of the essential oil of almonds.

The coroner remarking that it was a pity such articles should be sold even by authorized persons and in such large quantities, Mr. Drewer said the essential oil of bitter almonds was sold by every confectioner in the kingdom.

"For what purpose?"

"Well," replied Mr. Drewer, "it is used commonly in cooking, for flavoring custards, and other purposes. Indeed confectionery, such as is generally sold, contains poisons of all kinds."

"Indeed! Is that so? A nice reflection for those who eat confectionery. (Laughter.) I shall take care to give my cook some advice upon this point the moment I return home. (Laughter.) At the same time allow me to remark I am not jesting, and that this is not a theatre. I must request gentlemen present to control their emotions."

Witness continued to state that he could not understand at the time for what possible purpose Mr. Needham's groom might require essential oil of almonds in the stables. Arsenic, quite as deadly a poison, would of course have been an entirely different matter. It is a common thing to give arsenic to horses among their corn to improve their coats and condition. On the continent it is a very common practice, and it is a fact known to science that with regard to the administration of arsenic to horses and the taking of it by human beings that if it is discontinued the constitution breaks up with just the same symptoms as those which are produced by arsenical poisoning. The sufferers die from the want of it, but with every appearance of being the victims of poison.

Mary Atkinson, the parlor maid, was then called. If you have been present at serious trials for murder, or at equally painful inquests, you must have noticed on the part of the spectators a tendency to be amused. It is as if the mind, weighted with the tragic story, sought relief in the merest suggestion of comedy. The clever dramatist, dealing with a pathetic situation, understands this well, and seeks to give his audience the quick relief of an excuse for laughter. Mary Atkinson came upon the scene at Hampstead with the reputation of a humorist. She had, according to the butler, a habit of describing people whom she did not quite understand as being "mad as a hatter." Mary was an intelligent, bright-looking young woman, with a snub nose and a showy bonnet; and she was received with a general smile of approval. She related with minute detail a particular interview she had had with her late master on the afternoon of his death.

"And you said he was mad?"

"Yes, sir. I beg his pardon." (Laughter).

"Why did you think he was mad?"

"It was such a odd thing for him to ask me."

"To ask you what?"

"If I'd ever been to the opera."

"And so you thought he was mad because he asked you if you had ever been to the opera?"

"Well, sir, I did—I beg his pardon." (Laughter.)

"Don't beg his pardon, poor gentleman; he is beyond that. And I must request the officer to clear the court if there is any more laughter."

"Yes, sir. I'm very sorry. I wasn't laughing, and its no laughing matter for me, losing a good place and a good master."

And here she began to cry.

"There, there, that will do," said the coroner. "Pray control your feelings. Was there anything peculiar in Mr. Needham's manner that should lead you to think he was not in his right mind?"

"No more than what I have said, as it seemed so curious he should ask me if I'd ever been to the opera."

"Oh, yes, yes; we've heard that before. (Laughter.) I mean in his appearance or in his manner?"

"No, sir; I can't say as there was. But to say as he would give me and the others tickets, and he should see us there, was something so odd—I beg his pardon." (Laughter.)

"Very well. That will do."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir," said Mary, retiring into a corner to be upbraided by the cook for making a fool of herself, "and making all of us look as silly as you are."

Then came the evidence of Mr. Nolan. He described his visit to Mr. Needham on Saturday morning. He had received a telegraphic message from Dublin relating to some financial business, which he thought it desirable Mr. Needham should see. Mr. Needham was in financial difficulties far more serious than he, his solicitor, had contemplated, although serious enough to give him great anxiety. He found Mr. Needham not in his usual state of health, but depressed; looking very weary and tired, yet full of intellectual and mental resource. He shouldn't say that he exhibited the slightest tokens of insanity. It was not his intention to stay and breakfast with Mr. Needham, but he remained, and they talked over a great many business matters in relation both to the London and the Dublin banks, and to some questions of mortgages and other securities. He left Mr. Needham about half-past three in the afternoon, and that was the last time he saw him alive.

Henry Needham, brother of the deceased, next gave evidence of an unimportant character, with the exception of the reproduction of the letter with which the reader is already acquainted. The witness was very much affected during the reading of the letter, and once or twice was so much overcome that he paused and turned away his head to wipe the tears from his eyes. The dead silence in the court was ample evidence of the deep sympathy that was felt for the witness and other members of his family.

Horace Byles, of the firm of Byles, Grant & Byles, solicitors, Lombard street, deposed that on the morning of Friday preceding his death, the deceased, John Needham, called upon him and asked for financial assistance in the interests of the Needham Joint Stock bank, showing him some telegraphic messages he had received from Dublin on the subject of their wants, proposed several schemes for witness' consideration in regard to raising money, and after he (Horace Byles) told him they were not such schemes as he could recommend or adopt, Needham grew very excited and exclaimed, "Great God! If the bank fails it will be my fault and the ruin of thousands." He walked about the office with his hand to his head, and urged witness to help him. He had not been on very friendly terms with Needham for some time previously to this interview, on account chiefly of a disappointment in money matters. About a month before his death he remembered that a security Needham had given him, upon which he had found money for the Irish bank, had not been registered, and after Needham left on Friday he determined to have it registered. There was something so despairing in Needham's manner that he felt the bank was on the eve of collapse. During the conversation he (witness) mentioned this security to Needham, and there was something so strange in his manner he (witness) had a sudden suspicion that there was something wrong about it. He therefore sent his partner with the deed to Dublin. On arriving there he was not long in discovering that it was a forgery. The security purported to be a deed given on the purchase of an estate in the encumbered estates court. It was signed by two of the commissioners and two attesting witnesses, and not a single signature was genuine. (Sensation in court.) It had a real seal of the encumbered estates court attached to it, but there was no doubt it had been transferred from some other genuine deed. He (witness) attributed Needham's death to his excitement about the Needham bank and to his knowledge that he (witness) was about to send this deed over to Dublin for registration. There were rumors of other forgeries, but he knew of no other forged deed than his own. Several of Mr. Needham's deeds had from time to time passed through his hands to persons who had advanced money upon them, but he (witness) had no reason to believe that any one of them was not genuine. He did not think anybody enjoyed the deceased's confidence. Mr. Needham was a very reticent man; it was difficult to get any information from him beyond what he chose to impart. He should think Mr. Sadler had written the letters produced under great excitement, and he believed that some of the statements in them were not correct.

There was then a long discussion between the coroner and the witness as to what it was proper to disclose in regard to the deceased's affairs, what might be known and what might not; and the witness mentioned several circumstances indicating the serious financial difficulties in which Mr. Needham was involved.

The inquest was then adjourned until Thursday, when fresh evidence of a long and voluminous character was given, and other private letters were produced, and the correspondence in The Times was mentioned in terms anything but complimentary to Mr. Green. The coroner also deprecated the fact that several public journals had discussed Mr. Green's remarkable statement that he had seen the deceased and had spoken to him at Liverpool on the Sunday, when it was a fact beyond all manner of doubt that the unfortunate gentleman was lying dead at Hampstead workhouse. It was not his business to reply to these things, but he thought it a pity that a member of parliament should give his countenance to the new so-called spiritualistic craze, which was the revival of an old delusion much more worthy of the dark ages than the present. As for the journal which threw out the suggestion that the unfortunate deceased had procured the corpse of some other person to represent his own, and thus complete his villanies by carrying off a large sum of money and getting away to some other country, he thought it a mistake for the writer of that article to waste his imaginative powers upon a mere newspaper, instead of writing stories for The London Journal, or compiling dramas for the transpontine stage. No man, he believed, more than himself appreciated and valued the freedom of the press, but in this matter he confessed he thought both editors and correspondents had outstripped the line which divides liberty from license.

Passing from this feature of the case to the closing of the painful business before the jury, he summed up the evidence with great care, dwelling at some length upon the rights of the crown in reference to any property the deceased might have left, and in anticipation of the jury finding a verdict of felo-de-se. In ordinary cases, he said, so far as he could see, there was not, unfortunately—and he regretted to say it—any evidence to show that the deceased was not perfectly sane when he arranged to take his own life and did take it. The only suggestion to his mind, even of eccentricity in the matter, was that he should drive himself up to the spot where he was discovered. This was no doubt a strange thing to do. Nevertheless, it was clearly by forethought and design. On the day when he felt that Byles, Grant & Byles would, within twenty-four hours, have discovered the secret of his forgeries, he had resolved to commit suicide, purchasing the drugs for the purpose, sending his two men servants into the country, writing his last letters, and making other careful and intelligent arrangements to close his earthly career. It had been suggested that Hampstead heath was a favorite resort of the deceased, and that he had frequently been seen walking and driving there, walking, more particularly during the last two weeks, about the heath behind Jack Straw's Castle, and near the spot where his body was found. He must repeat, it was a curious thing that he should get his servants out of the way, for that was evidently the intention of the opera and the suppers, himself putting his horse into his carriage, sitting upon the box and driving it, evidently late at night and possibly through a storm of rain and thunder, to Hampstead heath. That was the only indication in the entire story that could warrant even a thought of insanity; but this was overbalanced tremendously, in his estimation, by the other facts of the case. With these suggestions and instructions he left the verdict in the hands of the jury, and thanked them on behalf of himself and all concerned for their patient attention to the painful details of one of the saddest cases that had come under his attention for many years.

The jury, after a short deliberation, gave a verdict of felo-de-se, which it was generally understood meant a midnight burial with something worse than maimed rights; but in this case the body had been previously removed to the deceased's residence in Portland place, and on the fifth day after death it was interred at Kensal Green, in the presence of a few private friends and relatives. And in due course there was written on a black and silver plate over the remains of Joseph Norbury the dishonored name of John Needham. Meanwhile a strange instinct of fear and mistrust in regard to her brother's welfare took possession of the mind of Kate Norbury.

TO BE CONTINUED.